

**Testimony of Sal Luciano
Before the Labor & Public Employees Committee
Feb. 18, 2014**

Good afternoon Chairman Osten, Chairman Tercyak and members of the Labor Committee.

My name is Sal Luciano. I am Executive Director of Council 4, a union representing 32,000 public service workers. I also serve as President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, the voice of more than 200,000 Connecticut workers.

Council 4 enthusiastically supports the following raised bills:

S.B. No. 32, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKING FAMILIES' WAGES. We applaud the Governor and the Labor Committee for leading the way on this issue. Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour will improve the standard of living for the poorest and most vulnerable Connecticut citizens who are struggling in this economy. When a larger number of citizens earn enough money to buy the things that make up the American Dream, we all prosper. Connecticut is a leader in many respects. What we can't afford is to lead the nation in income inequality. Raised Bill 32 will help lift people out of poverty and give a needed boost to our local economy.

H.B. No. 5066, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN WORKERS' RIGHTS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN. The share of income going to families in the middle class is greater in states with strong unions, according to a recent analysis by the Center for American Progress. Their findings demonstrate that states with higher union membership also benefitted from having more robust middle classes. The significance of this is heightened when you keep in mind that prosperous middle-class households are also powerful drivers of economic growth. That's why Raised Bill 5066 is so important. By expanding collective bargaining rights to probate system employees, agricultural employees and charter school employees, it will strengthen Connecticut's working middle class.

H.B. No. 5069, AN ACT CONCERNING LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS. Connecticut should not reward companies that pay their workers poorly and then receive and receive a taxpayer subsidy for doing it. HB 5069 would hold large corporations accountable by charging them a fee for each worker they pay poverty level wages. This would either encourage companies to pay a fair, livable wage, or would help the state offset the cost of aid programs. HB 5069 would help workers and the Connecticut economy by holding corporations economically accountable for the costs they pass on to Connecticut taxpayers.